

Weaving Our Worlds (WOW) Diversity Calendar

Frequently Asked Questions



1. What is diversity?

Diversity is everyone. It is how we identify and connect with each other either in visible ways (race, gender, ethnicity, physical abilities, etc.) or less visible ways (job level, sexual orientation, religion, age, etc.)

2. What is the significance of “Weaving Our Worlds”?

Weaving Our Worlds is the Diversity Office’s slogan and has many levels of meanings. It represents weaving together people of different racial, cultural, religious, educational, physical, age, family, professional, and other backgrounds to create the strong social and professional fabric that is the Laboratory workforce.

It also represents the way each of us weave all the aspects of diversity within ourselves as unique individuals. Many of us have multiple heritages and hold more than one religious belief. We may have both artistic and scientific talents. And all of us struggle at some point with conflicting beliefs within ourselves.

Lastly, it is a metaphor for the whole being stronger than any one strand. Woven together, the many elements create a beautiful tapestry. After reflecting upon these many levels and realizing what the acronym for our slogan was, all we could say was WOW!

3. What is the WOW Diversity Calendar?

The WOW Diversity Calendar is an expansive and engaging educational resource. The content data was purchased from Diversity Resources Inc. and automated for Lab use. The calendar was customized for Lab leaders and workers to promote diversity awareness. It contains over 800 observances that include cultural, religious, and historical events. It also includes the birthdays of heroes and famous people from diverse backgrounds that demonstrate invisible diversity (thinking style, personality traits, educational background, etc.) There are poets, filmmakers, scientists (Robert Oppenheimer, Glenn Seaborg, and Luis Alvarez included), artists, writers, musicians, political leaders and activists, etc.

4. Why did the Diversity Office decide to develop a calendar?

Every time the Laboratory polls its employees, the results clearly show the employees want more diversity awareness training for themselves and their managers. This was demonstrated in the 1999 Work Environment Survey, the 2000, 2001, and 2002 Checkpoint Surveys, the Affirmative Development Plan, the UNM study on Zero People Mistreatments, and exit evaluations from each diversity speaker presented to the workforce during the same time period. The workforce indicated diversity awareness training should be proactive, nonthreatening, informal, and voluntary to the employee. Thus the Diversity Office decided an entertaining, educational online calendar would meet those requirements.

5. What data did you use to make this decision?

The latest Checkpoint Survey (2002) results indicated that the Diversity Office's efforts are having a positive impact on the workforce. According to the survey, Lab employees responded favorably about diversity issues in the workplace:

Up slightly from 2001 and 1999, 85% of employee respondents said their work environment is accepting of ethnic/cultural differences.

65% said employees are treated with respect, regardless of their position.

84% of respondents said their work environment is accepting of gender differences, up slightly from last year.

69% of respondents said their group management recognizes the value of diverse perspectives and backgrounds, up 3% from 2001.

And 62% of the respondents said their own divisions provide management opportunities independent of ethnic, cultural, and gender differences, also up 3%.

These figures indicate the Laboratory work environment is improving, but there is more to be done. The diversity calendar is one step in that direction.

6. Why does the Laboratory need a diversity calendar?

The Laboratory workforce has become increasingly diverse, comprising people from a multitude of nations, ethnic backgrounds, religions, educational achievements, economic levels, and physical capabilities, to name only some of our differing characteristics. These visible and invisible characteristics affect the way we live, think and, work.

For this institution to continue to produce great science, the environment must be conducive to active contributions by all members of the workforce and to leverage our diverse characteristics. That is why diversity is an institutional value. It is also the reason that *Workforce Synergy Improvement* became the ninth initiative in the Director's Performance Improvement Plan (DPIP). We are positioning the Laboratory to create a welcoming environment for our diverse workforce. The calendar is supportive of that synergistic workforce initiative

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7. What are its uses?

Event Planning

The diversity calendar is an important tool in weaving diversity into LANL operations. Public holidays and observances that are important to a specific culture or religion are marked with a purple “X” indicating that they should be schedule considerations. When leaders and organizations are scheduling meetings, conferences, and other events, they can use the calendar to avoid schedule conflicts for those invited.

For example, a team that includes Jewish members should avoid scheduling a function during Rosh Hashanah, an observance important to the Jewish community. This promotes an inclusive environment by eliminating conflicting obligations for the team members.

In addition, anyone planning a Lab function that includes food or drink should consider the dietary needs of the participants. Some calendar descriptions include dietary requirements associated with the observance. In addition, event planners should also ask participants about dietary needs to accommodate employees with allergies and special medical requirements, which is an invisible form of diversity.

Leadership/Team Building

Another way the diversity calendar can help leaders and teams build a more inclusive work environment is as an educational resource. Understanding co-workers is crucial to effective teaming and communication. In reality, culturally neutral workplaces are not possible. Employees don’t stop being Christian, Hindu, Japanese, or gay when the weekend is over.

The calendar allows employees to learn about the cultures, practices, heroes, historical events, and foods important to those they work with. Understanding each other fosters cooperation, teamwork, and better working relationships.

8. You mentioned foods. How are they incorporated into the calendar?

The calendar provides information about the food and drink used on many of the observances. In addition, there are about 50 recipes that are linked to the observances for which the dishes are prepared.

The Diversity Office will be partnering with Aramark, the Laboratory’s cafeteria vendor, to serve some of the dishes on various occasions throughout the year. For instance, Aramark served several dishes from Mexico on Cinco de Mayo. The recipe for one of the dishes served, sopa de tortilla (tortilla soup), is available on the new calendar at

<http://www.lanl.gov/orgs/dvo/WOWCalendar/Recipes/sopadetort.html>

9. What kind of information will I find in the diversity calendar?

In the calendar you will find the following types of information: . . .

For example, by consulting the calendar, you will learn that William Grant Still, an African-American composer and conductor, was born on May 11, 1895. He was the first African American to compose a symphony and the first to conduct a symphony orchestra, but he made his living playing in orchestras and jazz bands. He often incorporated jazz elements in his own compositions, the most famous of which are his *Afro-American Symphony* (1951), an excerpt of which is provided in a sound file, and the opera *Troubled Island* (1949). You'll also see a photo of Still and a picture of a puzzle he created to entertain his family.

http://DominoApp.lanl.gov/lanl/lanlevents.nsf/diversity_all_display/JITO-5J7PGC (from inside Lab)

http://lanldb1.lanl.gov/lanl/lanlevents.nsf/diversity_all_display/JITO-5J7PGC (from outside Lab)

10. What is the web address for the WOW Diversity Calendar?

From within the Laboratory, you can access the calendar at

<http://dominoapp.lanl.gov/lanl/lanlevents.nsf/WOWCalendar?OpenForm&calDate=Current>. From outside the Laboratory, the URL is

<http://lanldb1.lanl.gov/lanl/lanlevents.nsf/WOWCalendar?OpenForm&calDate=Current>. The calendar will be accessible via the Diversity Office website shortly.

11. Are there other online diversity calendars?

Yes, the University of Kansas Medical Center, Ohio State University Libraries, Department of the Interior, Johns Hopkins University, and Penn State, to name a few. You can find them by searching the Internet for "diversity calendar." Diversity Resources, Inc. and ProGroup both sell licenses to online diversity calendars.

12. How does this calendar differ from other online diversity calendars?

More expansive

By licensing the observances contained in the calendar through Diversity Resources, Inc, the Diversity Office was able to leverage their expertise. Though we've licensed the selection of observances with descriptions, the calendar design was developed internally. By doing so, it has allowed us to augment observance descriptions with images/photo and multimedia to give the calendar more depth. It often draws on information from other fun learning sites such as the Smithsonian Institute, the Discovery Channel, PBS, and National Geographic. It is the most expansive of any existing online diversity calendar. Compare for yourself (see question above).

More sustainable

Most online diversity calendars require constant upkeep for moveable observances such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, whose date changes annually. Also, many observances are not based on the Gregorian calendar, with which most of us are familiar, and also change annually.

The DVO calendar developer made sure it would require little to no maintenance for the next five years. She accomplished this by contracting the services of RPM Development to convert the calendar content into a five-year data set. Working with IM-8, she developed a database-driven website using this data set. The dates and observances in the calendar are automatically updated.

13. Do any Laboratory diversity events appear on the calendar?

The WOW Calendar is integrated with the institutional Laboratory Events Calendar. By working with IM-8, events submitted to the Lab's Events Calendar by the Diversity Affirmative Action Board and the seven Diversity Working Groups will automatically appear in the diversity calendar. Because of our work with IM-8, they can now offer a higher level of customization for Laboratory calendars than was previously available. On a side note, this will save a great deal of work by the Diversity Office webmaster each year.

14. Can this calendar be purchased exactly as it appears on the web?

No. There has been extensive customization to the calendar content found in the Diversity Resources, Inc. calendar. As a result, this calendar is a one-of-a-kind diversity tool designed specifically for non-commercial educational purposes.

However, if other institutions would like to undertake development of a similar calendar, we would be happy to share *Lessons Learned* in the development process. Contact Laurie Quon at lquon@lanl.gov for more information.

15. Was web accessibility for the disabled considered in developing the calendar?

Yes. The calendar's developer, Laurie Quon, is also the Laboratory's expert on web accessibility and has been asked to lead the web accessibility initiative at LANL. We are using the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) accessibility recommendations. Our goal is to make the calendar not just accessible but also easy to use regardless of a user's physical abilities.

16. Why do some observances have images while others don't?

The diversity calendar is a huge undertaking. It has been under development about a year and a half, and in some respects is still under construction. We will continue to add images and multimedia throughout the coming year to observances as they occur until all have been completed.

17. May someone outside the Laboratory use the diversity calendar?

Those who want to view the calendar to identify how their own organizations might incorporate a diversity calendar are welcome. But linking to it is prohibited because of copyright issues associated with the calendar content license. The content is licensed to the LANL Diversity Office for internal use only.

18. Has the Diversity Office planned any special events to educate the workforce about the calendar?

To celebrate the Weaving Our Worlds Diversity Calendar, DVO will be sponsoring three get-acquainted trivia contests. At the initial calendar rollout, we will award Lunch with Pete to six members of the workforce.

When we roll out the Aramark partnership, we will have the second trivia contest, and prizes will be 25 food coupons redeemable in the Aramark cafeterias for specific items linked to calendar events.

Then about a month later we will have a third contest, and the top ten winners will each receive an original artist's weavings in American Indian designs to recognize the *Weaving Our World* website redesign.

Be sure to watch the *NewsBulletin* for information about these three contests and other promotions throughout the year.